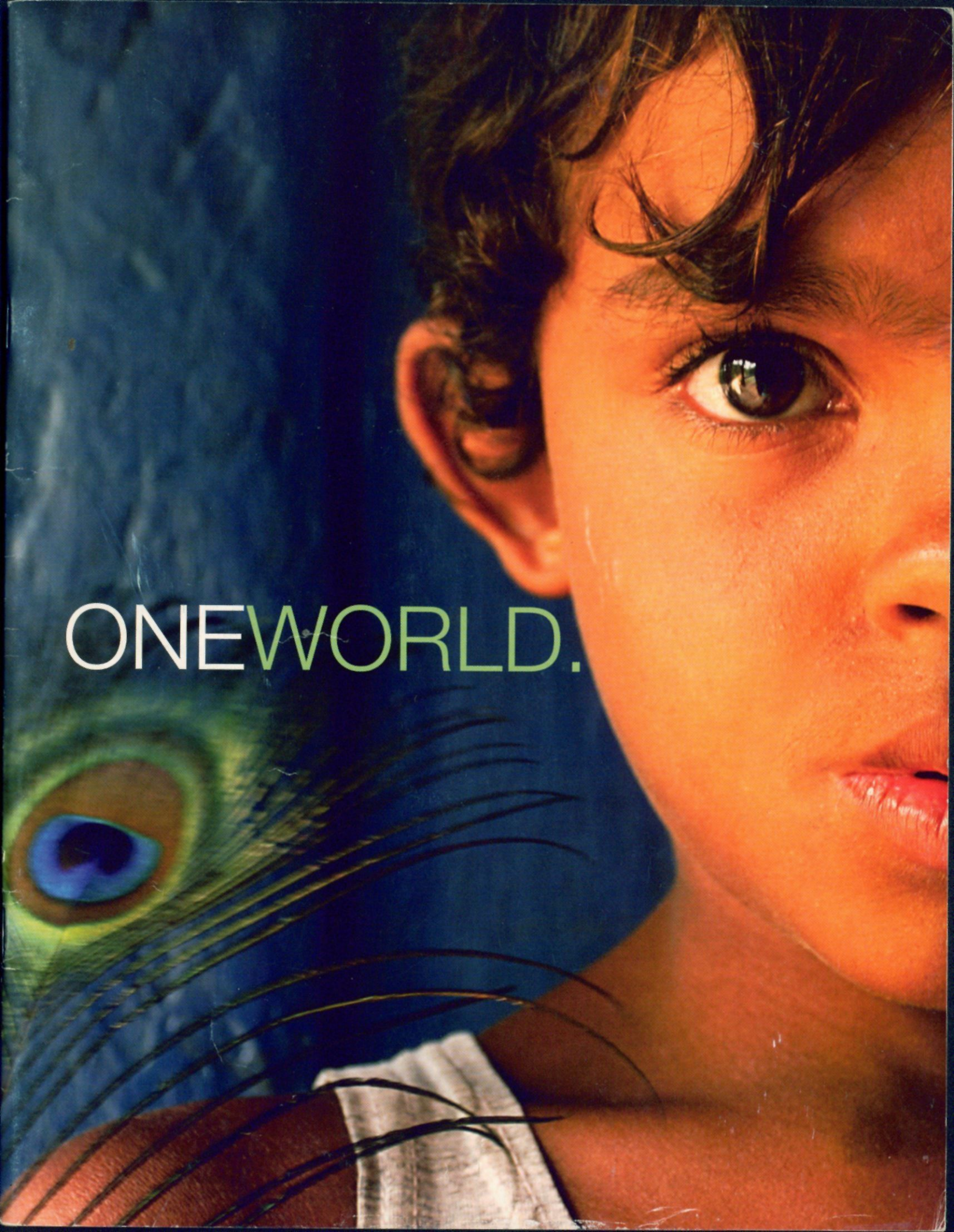
ONEWORLD.

One World.

Issue One. Volume One.

5.3.06

Though we are many, we are One. Many peoples, One common humanity. Many religions, One message. Many struggles, One hope, One love, One vision. We are *One World*.

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The ONE WORLD *staff would like to give a special thank you to Ms. Donna Bess and the Cross Cultural Center.*

Dear Readers.

Without exposure to the harsh economic and political realities that the rest of the world faces, we can easily slip into thinking that the U.S. way of life is the norm around the world. We fail to realize that the U.S. is the exception to the norm. When we recognize that all places and people do not share in this same luxury and start to become aware of the grave suffering that is going on in the world around us, then we must respond. These are our brothers and sisters that are suffering, and someone must do something to help them.

Who is responsible for aiding some of these crises around the world? The United States is the wealthiest, most privileged and powerful society the world has ever known. The democratic nature of the U.S. relies on the decisions of its citizens to determine the outcome of our political choices. Simply having a college education puts us in the top 1% of the most privileged elite in the world. Especially at a Jesuit university that strives to be "men and women for others," we not only have the capacity, we have the moral responsibility to take advantage of our democratic power to be a voice for the voiceless. We must hear the cries of the least among us, let them resonate within us, and echo them in our lives. Raising consciousness and awareness to international issues is the necessary first step in taking action to help. Thus came the birth of *One World*.

One World is based upon the notion that while we are many in our cultures, religions, and struggles, we are one in our common humanity and one in our vision of peace for the future. There is a value inherent to every person that transcends national borders and all differences that exist among us. We believe that every citizen, especially students at SLU, have a unique capacity to exercise their privilege and power to ensure that the dignity of all people be upheld. We must first become aware of the issues that are going on in the world around us. Then, with well-reasoned conviction, we must strive in our actions to live out our faith in the service of others.

The aim of *One World* is to draw all of the various groups on campus together in order to achieve greater unity and thus greater effectiveness in tackling difficult social issues. With a concerted effort we can fully utilize our potential to make a statement and an impact on the world around us. This aim will be pursued in two ways. The first is in the quarterly publication of a magazine. The magazine is a compilation of articles written by ordinary students involved in various groups who have the desire to share their knowledge, experiences, and ideas about current international issues. There will also be an organizational component. This organization, through town-hall discussions, speakers, and events, will bring forth the most pressing issues in the world that demand our attention and action today. The success of this worthwhile endeavor relies on each and every one of you. It does not require anything more than a desire to use your privilege and power to help. First, just read the magazine to learn more about the issues. Check out website at www.sluoneworld.com or send us an email at act@sluoneworld.com. Let us know what you think. Lastly, be ready to get involved and make an impact next year with *One World*.

Sincerely,
Editorial Board

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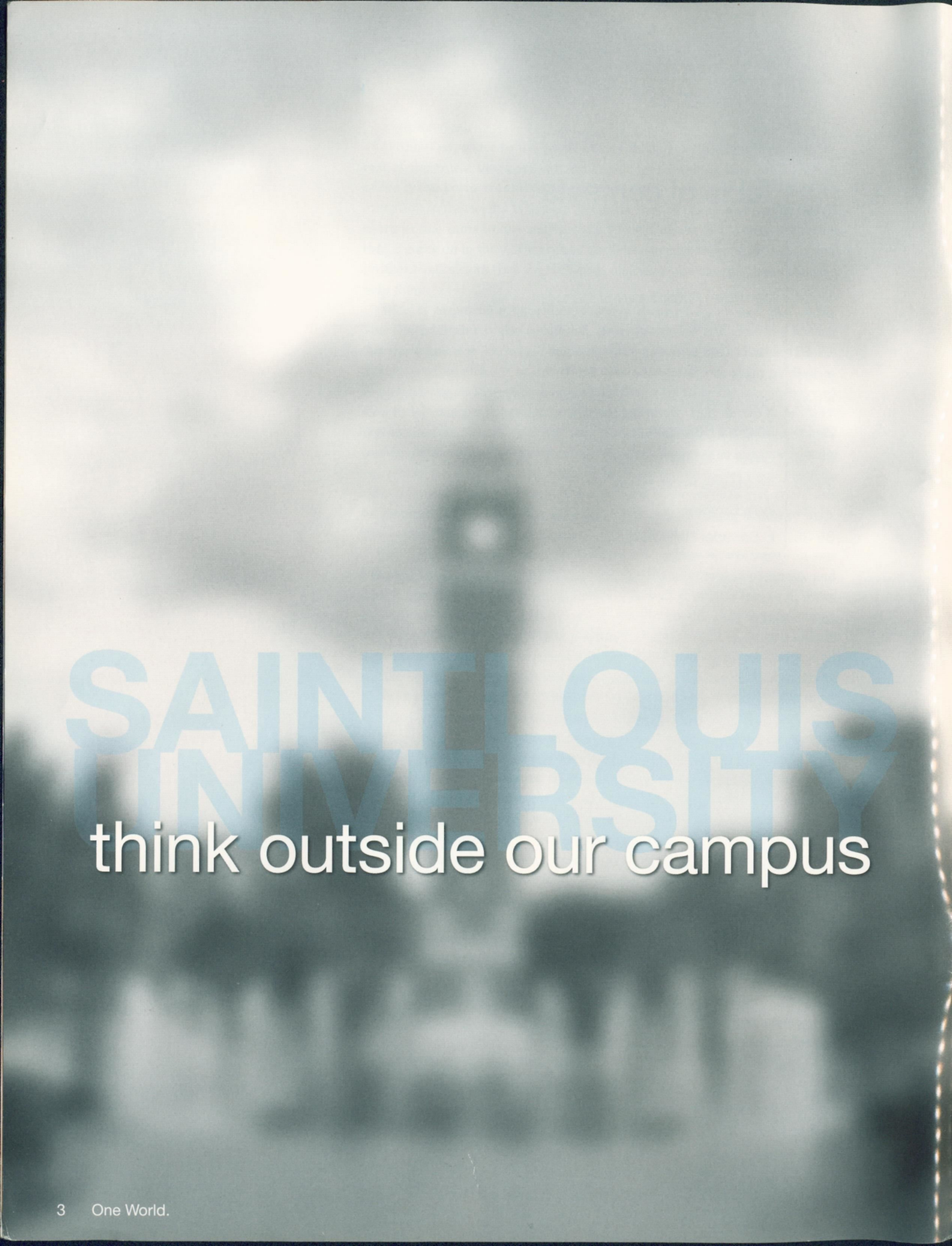
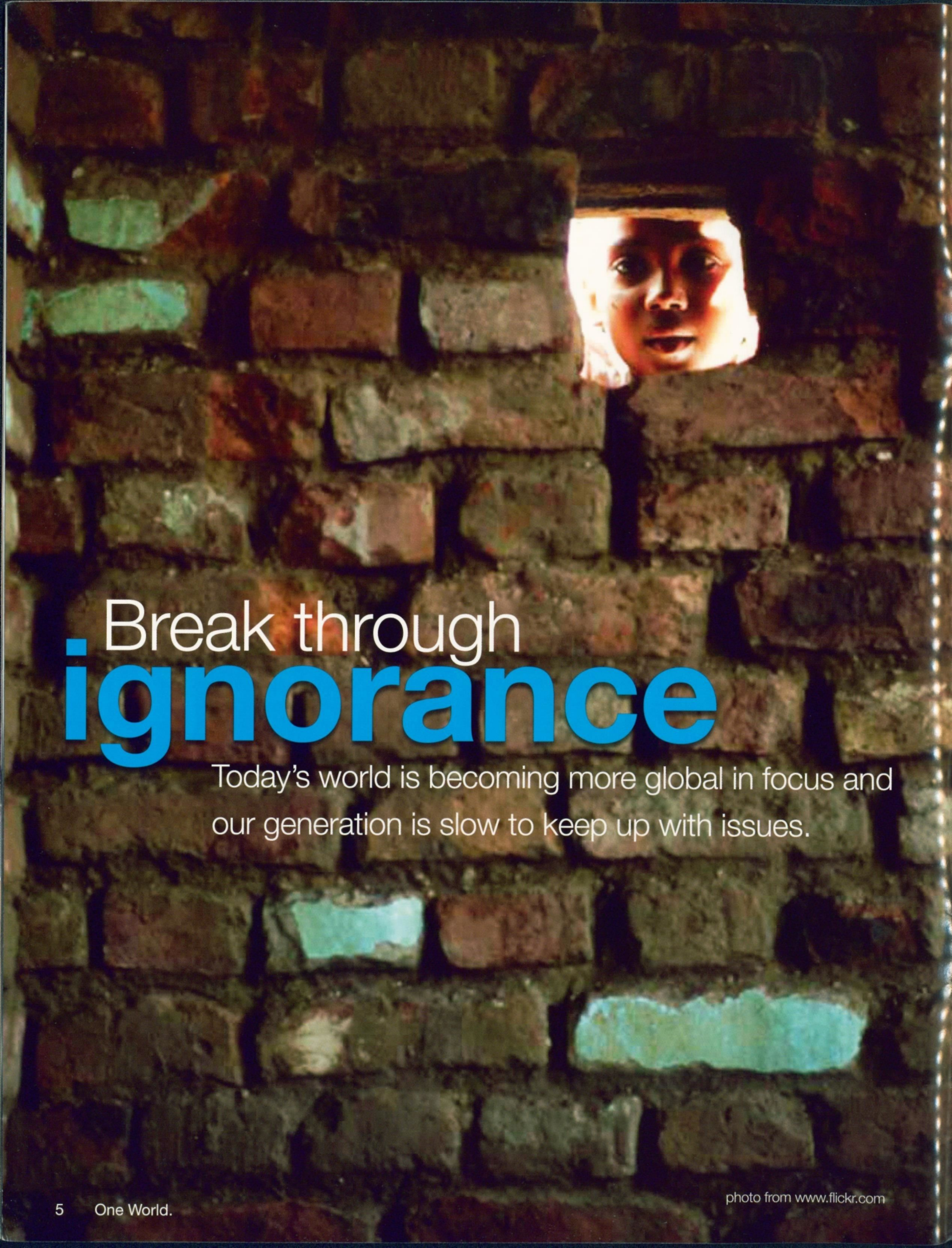

SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY
think outside our campus

By Jesse Sullivan

INITIALLY, SOME MIGHT THINK this magazine is filled with depressing pictures and articles aimed at evoking guilt among its readers. Granted, the heavy topics of suffering, poverty, starvation and war are not going to be as entertaining as the those in *Maxim*, *Men's Health* or *Sports Illustrated*. So why pick up *One World* instead? Why look at pictures of sad foreign children rather than half-naked supermodels? Why read about the shocking experience of a fellow student fighting in Iraq when you could be taking a sex quiz in *Cosmo*? Why would it be good to expose yourself to the harsh realities of the world and let them sink into your heart and mind? Won't that just take away your happiness and lead to depression? No, we are not just the paper version of SNL's Debbie Downer—the annoying voice of reality out to ruin your good time. We actually believe there is something valuable to be gained from exposing yourself to the truth of reality.

We spend our whole lives trying to block out the tragedy, suffering and chaos of the world around us. We believe happiness is found in pleasure—and it is. Partying, shopping, using our new iPods and cell phones are all joys of the college life. Going to penny pitchers and happy hour at Humphrey's and Laclede's, getting the prettiest dress for the sorority formal, kicking it with friends, watching movies and playing Nintendo; these are the kinds of things we'll remember when we graduate. Cruise over to Ted Drew's after the Cards game and crank the new system—live it up, it's college. We should take advantage of every opportunity to happily enjoy our privileges. But the question we must ask ourselves is, "Does pleasure alone bring true happiness?" When the fun has died down and the hangover of college still lingers you must ask yourself, "Am I fulfilled?" In the silent calm we hear the answer. It might come before you go to bed, when you look yourself in the eyes in the mirror, or during 10 pm student mass; this feeling says, "There must be more to life than this." We try to ignore the answer or drown it out with more activities and noise; we attempt to fill the void by seeking increased pleasure but it doesn't work. The American dream lived to the extreme has left us all straining to "enjoy" ourselves more and more while we lose a valuable sense of meaning in our lives. We are a society that rarely takes its focus off material pleasure and takes the time to ask what is worth doing. What gives my life meaning and value? Our blinded quest for pleasure alone has led to the startling statistic that the number one killer of people our age is suicide.

No one denies the benefits of enjoying ourselves, but we also need meaning in order to be truly happy and fulfilled. We can find no greater purpose for our lives than helping those in need. The good and the bad news is that there is plenty of need out there just waiting for our help. The point of *One World* is not to guilt or to depress anyone, but to do the exact opposite. We open ourselves to the harsh realities of the world in order to find ourselves and find meaning in our existence. We begin by trying to help fix the other, but in the process we end up fixing ourselves. Therefore, we need to find room in our hearts for the plight of the other—and we must clear a place on our magazine rack for *One World*.



Break through ignorance

Today's world is becoming more global in focus and our generation is slow to keep up with issues.

photo from www.flickr.com

Look past yourself. Uganda

by Patrick McGinnis

THE UNIMAGINABLE becomes the imaginable every day, all over the world. War, genocide, and disease are rampant in all corners of the world. On top of all these injustices, the horrible events in Uganda are among the most grave. In 1987, a rebel organization known as the Lord's Resistance army was created in opposition of the Uganda government. The group's leader, Joesoph Kony, fueled the movement in hopes of establishing a government based on Biblical Millenarianism. This is a social, religious, and political faction aimed at changing all things in a positive direction. Other than these beliefs, the group has never clearly stated their political aims.

Since the group's formation in 1987, over 20,000 children have been abducted. Up to 12,000 people have been killed in the violence, with many more dying from disease and malnutrition as a direct result of the conflict.

These abductions and killings have been primarily targeted at the Acholi people. Millions of Acholi have fled their homes in hopes of avoiding this horrible problem. These people have cried out for government help for years. The poor quality of life in Uganda has only deteriorated since the beginning of this conflict. Children from Uganda are not able to sleep in their own homes and feel safe. Each night hundreds of kids flock to verandas in nearby cities to sleep in the safety of numbers. However, most of these children are unable to escape the horrible violence that surrounds them. Many have seen their friends and siblings die in front of them and witnessed events most of us wish to never see. The Ugandan children are unable to cry over these atrocities because crying will only get them killed.

The children who are abducted and forced into the Lord's Resistance Army experience what may be the most horrific part of this situation. They are taken to the "bush" and immediately desensitized by the LRA. LRA officers choose the weak children and slaughter them in front of the newly abducted. Then the children are forced to tell the LRA where to find their friends in order to abduct them too. These children are then given guns and trained how to use them properly, so they are essentially taught how to kill. In the United States, children are considered the most precious commodity. They are the future and are cared for by all. In Uganda, children are being abducted, murdered, and raped. They are not treated with the same respect many Americans demand for their own children. Although only recently brought to the media's attention, the war in Uganda is one of the most severe problems in the world. More information about this atrocity can be learned from watching the documentary Invisible Children or visiting www.invisiblechildren.com.

Rob Gartland

Popping the bubble. Djibouti

by Travis England

Market in Djibouti // www.flickr.com

DJIBOUTI (jì-boo-tee). Say it five times fast. It's certainly a fun word to say, but what is a djibouti, anyway?

Could it be the result of clandestine legislation by the SLU Board of Trustees to transform the Billikens to a radical new team name: the Saint Louis University "Djiboutis"? Is it a scandalous new euphemism making its way through college campuses nationwide, bringing forth Saturday morning dorm-room inquiries of "Did you djibouti last night?" Or is it the latest trend from the creators of Furby?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you're trapped in a bubble... and it's time for Djibouti to burst that bubble. If you didn't know, here's the picture: Djibouti is a small country located in the Horn of Africa (northeastern Africa). It has a total area that is approximately the size of the state of Vermont and a yearly economic output of about 3% the size of Vermont's. Having recently emerged from a decade-long civil war and currently suffering a recession, the country is facing unemployment rates of 40-50%.

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Lesson of love.

Guatemala

by Natalie Hernandez

Safe Passage represents an effort to provide hundreds of children at the Guatemala City garbage dump with the skills, care, support and supervision they need in order to lift themselves and their families from grinding poverty. They work to help these at-risk children stay in school and pursue their dreams of an education.

The children piled out of the bus early that day looking timid but enthusiastic. While waiting for them on the front steps of our school, we could not have imagined how greatly those short hours were going to impact our lives. We had spent a week planning activities and games for them, but we soon realized that they would rather run and play outside on the soccer field. They rolled around in the fresh grass, a new thing that some had never seen before. This was the first time in their lives that they were able to play in something other than garbage. The dump has no room for vegetation, only the waste that serves as their homes, work area, and playground.

Young boy in Guatemalan trash dump // www.safepassage.com

Prior to the event, parents of the volunteers were asked to bring a food dish of some sort to serve the children at lunch time. We all knew what they usually ate was any leftovers they could scourge up in the heaps of trash. The result was a long stretch of food extended along several tables in the cafeteria. As we led the children in, their eyes grew wide as they stared at the packed tables in front of them. At first, they did not understand or could not believe that it was all for them. Once we assured them that it was, however, they quickly formed a line and piled food onto their plates. Rice, chicken, salad, and potatoes were heaped on top of their paper plates, which ultimately began bending from the strain. Each held more food than their frail bodies could ever eat, but we smiled as we watched them haul their treasures to their chairs. We sat eagerly, waiting for them to eat a real meal, some for the very first time. We waited, but they did not eat. Some half-heartedly poked the food about, but most simply sat there staring at their plates. Finally, I leaned forward and asked the little girl in front of me; "What's wrong? Aren't you hungry?" She looked up at me, her large brown eyes pleading, and tentatively asked in her adorable 5 year old Spanish; "Could I take some to my family?" My eyes welled up with tears when I finally understood the problem; the children felt guilty eating while their parents and grandparents were working at the dump. They refused to eat knowing that their families would be spending another day being hungry. Quickly, we brought out zip-lock bags, containers, and anything they could take home with them. They happily filled them with their food and they began to eat.

That single day taught me more about life than any other I can remember. How many of us could live in some of the worst conditions known, without food or shelter, and maintain such a beautiful outlook on life? These children don't complain about their situation, instead, they take advantage of the moments that are given to them. When given an opportunity to forget their troubles for a day, they selflessly think first of helping their families. The love those children hold inside of them is stronger than any hardships that they have endured. Their strength and love continues to inspire me to this day.

Popping the bubble.

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So what's the point of talking about Djibouti, a tiny nation on the other side of the world?

Djibouti has made a hole in the bubble that surrounds your world. You now know what and where it is. Pat yourself on the back, that's great! Hop in your low-pollution hybrid hatchback and head to Starbucks to buy yourself a low-fat fair-trade latte, knowing that your awareness of Djibouti's existence means you are on your way to becoming an "in the know" citizen of the earth.

Meanwhile, as your $4 self-congratulatory latte gives you the jolt you need to continue making a difference in the world, a young Darfurian male has just taken his last breath and died of malnutrition.

"Where's Darfur?," some might ask. "Is that near Djibouti? You know better, though. You know that Darfur is a region in western Sudan where civil war and ethnic conflict have torn apart the lives of the inhabitants of the region. What's more, you've signed the petition at www.savedarfur.com calling for action on the part of the United States to provide humanitarian intervention in the situation. Now you have really made a difference!

While you revel in your benevolent contribution to worldwide humanitarian efforts on your way home from Starbucks, you notice that racing around to save the planet has worn a hole in one of your sneakers. No problem though, since once you get home you can boot up your laptop and connect to www.nosweatapparel.com to order yourself a new pair of sneakers guaranteed not to be made in a sweatshop.

photo from flickr.com

I, Realized

Reflection

by Ginny Winninger

ON A DARK, moist July night, our plane finally landed in the Ghana Airport after 14 long hours of travel. As our mission team hurried through customs, hundreds of emotions rushed through my veins. Fear, anxiety, excitement—all bottled into the pit of my stomach. Everything passed in a blur as we boarded our rickety white bus and made the drive to the nearest retreat center to spend the night. Laying down in bed many hours later, I closed my eyes imagining the sights we would be greeted with in the morning. The rising of the new sun would reveal the country we'd long been waiting to see. Boarding the bus the next morning, I ventured out into a world that seemed very different from my own. Preparing to go to Africa as a teen representative, I imagined what most people picture when they think of a third world country: the heartbreaking poverty, the devastating diseases, and the eminent danger.

Unfortunately, over the next few days, I found my perceptions to be very true. The many hours spent driving distances that in the United States would take a mere 20 minutes, provided endless time to watch the city life. The bus passed many one-roomed houses held together by a few rotting two-by-fours, something most Americans would be embarrassed to use as a shed. The streets were lined with little shops consisting of tin sheets supported by wooden rods. Hour after hour, day after day, the owner waits in vain, hoping that a customer will purchase one of his goods.

Children scurry up and down the sides of the muddy roads selling everything, from snails to toilet paper, out of the buckets balanced agilely on their heads. Every hundred yards, our bus had to swerve to avoid another abandoned car or truck that had malfunctioned. It was disheartening to see the wooden birthing beds and old-fashioned instruments when we visited hospitals. My heart was crushed when I

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As your new sneakers make their way across the ocean to arrive at your doorstep in only 7 days, a 19-year-old Mexican girl has just drowned after a 27-day attempt to cross the border illegally into the United States. Rushing to cross the border in the hopes of attaining a job that will allow her to support her three brothers and two sisters still in a small town in Mexico, she had a small chance of success anyway. The family of the girl lives in a village with no running water and four electrical outlets for the entire town. Cut off from viable sources of communication, they continue to anxiously wait for weeks for word from their daughter.

The bubble has a few more holes now.

Of course, the point of this story is not knowing what and where Djibouti is, nor is the point of this magazine to deliver all of the "facts" needed to be an aware citizen of the world. It's goal, however, is to stimulate interest in international issues among SLU students. These are the "mainstream" subjects of international concern that seem to be the vogue of contemporary campuses throughout the U.S. Maybe you already know about the subjects discussed in the pages of this issue. Maybe not. The point is, the rest of the world is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore.

There are plenty of opportunities at SLU to break out of our comfort zones and become more aware of the rest of the world. Studying abroad, taking a foreign language or International Studies class, or just using campus resources to research international issues are all easy ways to escape the bubble that often traps SLU students into a limited worldview. Find an issue, read a little more about it and start breaking your bubble.

I, Realized.

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peered into a bed holding frail, twin newborns the size of my hands, clinging desperately for life. I attended mass at a church the villagers have been building for 10 years that lacked windows, a floor, and even a proper roof.

Although I was surrounded by such a painful deprivation, there was an emotion so heavily present in the air that it was almost impossible to ignore. Spirit and joy dwell abundantly in the hearts of the people of Ghana. Looking into their deep, sparkling eyes and watching them dance along to the beat of the drums, the excitement of the villagers captured

> It's the lesson that there is more to life than having the biggest house or the trendiest shoes.

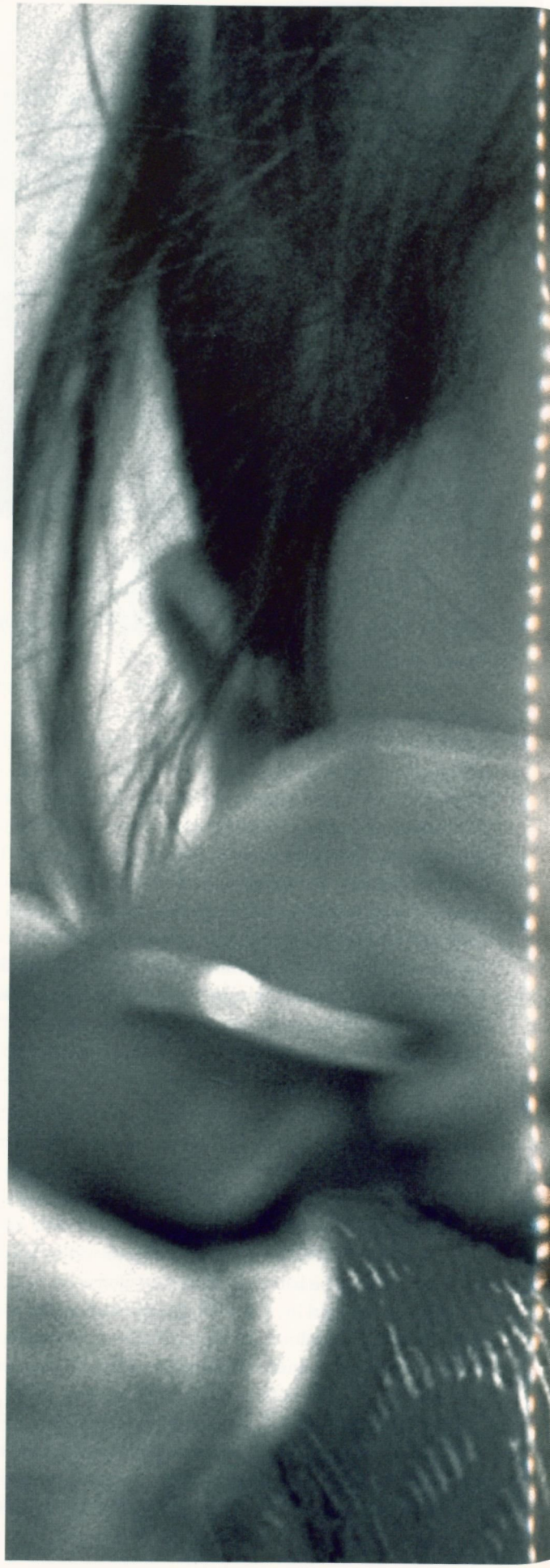
my heart. Immediately looking past our differences, I was welcomed as one of their family.Despite the poverty in their lives, the people carry immense pride in their communities, and happy children run everywhere. All of the adults help each other raise their children and the community becomes their family. If the family suffers, the community suffers. Everyone works as a team towards success.

Untainted by the materialism magazines and TV provide, children eagerly participate in the simplest games. Over 100 kids of all ages scrambled to participate in a wild soccer game that lasted half the day. Kids gathered in huge groups anxious to receive only a butterfly sticker. Throughout all of the commotion, the bigger kids cared for the little ones, no questions asked.

Living in a community where five hours of Mass isn't enough time to give God the praise He deserves. Their priorities became crystal clear. Putting a good portion of their energy into dressing in their finest clothes, the villagers attend Mass looking as though they are preparing for a grand party. Their love for Christ radiates on the outside as well as the inside. Energy shoots down their bones and emerges in beautiful dance. During offering, the congregation gives what little money they have, even though they are struggling at home to buy the bare necessities. It's no wonder Jesus finds so much joy in the poor.

We can support the people of Africa with monetary gifts, but in my trip to Ghana, I realized that they can give us a much greater gift that money can't buy. It's the lesson that there is more to life than having the biggest house or the trendiest shoes. Quality of life relies on our relationships with family, friends, and greatest of all—God. We should all strive to learn a little from our brothers and sisters in Ghana, even if it means slowing down and finding happiness in the little things.

In the end, there is one final question to be asked—Is poverty a lack of possession or a condition of the heart?



malnourished [illegible] photo from www.charity.org

Malnutrition

by Manuela Rodriguez

A hidden reality, an open heart

WE MUST STA[illegible]de by side with the tiny hand reaching out, [illegible] the little voice that struggles for survival, and with our younger brothers and sisters who yearn for proper nourishment. We cannot escape into another dimension and ignore the tragedies of our era, closing our ears, eyes and hearts to the anguish that pervades life. We must be immersed in this world, ready to run to wherever there is a child in need of help, a tear to be dried, a mouth to be fed, a body to be clothed, a request for help to be answered. Malnutrition continues to destroy innocent lives throughout the globe. In Central America the numbers increase daily. Although we aren't exposed to the reality of malnutrition in children across Central America, it's necessary to understand that this disease persists and that many children continue to suffer the consequences.

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A hidden reality, an open heart.

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A child dies every six seconds from malnutrition, adding up to 15,000 children dying each day worldwide. The causes that attribute to the large increase of malnutrition in Central America are numerous. First the natural disasters that are a regular occurrence in Central America- earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and drought are part of its past, present, and future, contributing to the poverty that affects those living in the area. Secondly, two decades of social and political conflict in El Salvador and Nicaragua and three in Guatemala have further aggravated the situation. Many children are highly vulnerable to disease and malnutrition. One in four children under five years of age is chronically malnourished and one in eight children die before their fifth birthday in this region. Nearly 75,000 severely malnourished children have been identified within the last decades, a direct consequence of extreme poverty.

There is a common belief that children are the leaders of our future. If this is true, then how can we allow malnutrition in children to continue to grow? Traumatic events that occur in infancy and childhood will affect behavior and development in children. A child's early experiences are known to influence attitudes toward the learning process, the self-concept, and the ability to maintain social and emotional relationships in later life. For this reason, children who suffer from malnutrition must not be neglected. Poor children in developing countries most commonly suffer from a deficiency known as protein-energy malnutrition. In these cases, children lack protein in their diets, especially from not receiving a sufficient amount of their mother's milk. Protein-energy malnutrition leads to a variety of problems, including gastrointestinal disorders, stunted growth, poor mental development, and high rates of infection.

Other parts of the globe lack an understanding of the harmful diseases that are caused by malnutrition. One common disease that children in Central America are diagnosed with is Kwashiorkor. Kwashiorkor is a disease resulting from a deficiency of dietary protein relative to caloric intake. Kwashiorkor is one of the most common forms of protein-energy malnutrition. This disorder occurs most commonly in young children in developing countries when mothers' breast milk no longer provides enough protein, and other protein-rich foods are not given in sufficient quantity, such as in Nicaragua or Guatemala. Although its symptoms can occur at any age, Kwashiorkor usually appears in already poorly nourished children after an infection further worsens their health. The disease is rapidly fatal unless the individual receives more dietary protein.

Kwashiorkor is characterized by swollen and discolored skin on the arms, legs and sometimes on the face or the whole body, thin and pale hair that is easily and painlessly pulled out, diarrhea, profound apathy, stunted growth edema, protuberant belly and loss of appetite. Internally, tissues and organs waste away, except for the liver, which increases in size owing to the accumulation of fat. The child's undernourished body retains water, leading to swelling in the abdomen and face. These changes occur because amino acids, the building blocks of protein, are not available in adequate amounts for forming the many different proteins needed for normal structure and function.

Another form of protein-energy malnutrition in children is Marasmus, which results from slow starvation caused by a deficiency not only of protein but also of calories and of other nutrients. Marasmus is characterized first by a relatively rapid loss of fat and then by a slow loss of lean body tissue.

Food for thought.

- Hunger is a political condition. We have enough resources to end this problem.
- War is the primary cause of chronic hunger.
- Poverty and lack of female education increase third world birthrate causing overpopulation.
- Female education is one of the best preventions of malnutrition
- India is the country with the highest number of malnourished people
- 829 million people are malnourished in the world. At the same time, 378,000 Americans underwent liposuction to remove excess fat from their bodies in 2002.

Except for wasting of the body, no other signs, symptoms, or other changes occur, because the slow breakdown of lean tissues provides sufficient amino acids for essential new protein manufacture. For complex metabolic reasons, this process does not occur in Kwashiorkor. As body fat becomes exhausted in marasmus, the lean body mass is increasingly broken down to provide energy, and death soon follows.

The World Health Organization reported that 1.5 to 3.5 percent of children in developing countries have severe protein-calorie malnutrition with some manifestations of Kwashiorkor or Marasmus. Kwashiorkor and Marasmus are often confused because symptoms and the progress of the disease depend greatly on the relative degrees of protein and calorie deficiencies. Kwashiorkor may therefore be superimposed on Marasmus, and most cases can more properly be called Marasmic Kwashiorkor. If caught in time, both Kwashiorkor and Marasmus respond to dietary treatment, with complete recovery except for stunted growth and development.

Malnutrition is not the only problem of just one nation in Central America. Guatemala currently has the highest rate of chronic malnutrition in Latin America, affecting 47% of children under five. Since a severe drought in the summer of 2005, 126 children have died from malnutrition. According to government surveys, an estimated 60,000 Guatemalan children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition, with 6,000 at risk of dying. The government also reported that 102 of the country's 331 municipalities don't have adequate food supplies and are in need of assistance. The groups hit hardest by this lack of food are 59,000 children aged under five and expectant and nursing mothers. Nicaragua is the third poorest country in the Americas, with a per capita gross national product of $453. Over 4 billion people, two-thirds of the world's population, live under two dollars a day. Today, throughout the region, families in poor farming communities no longer have the reserves to cope with the drought and are finding it nearly impossible to recover as one disaster follows another. When there is sufficient rainfall, farmers are able to produce enough maize and beans for food, exchanging any surplus for other products, including eggs and meat, which are very scarce in these communities. However, severe rainfall is rare, and drought continues to persist. "Now, the situation is so bad that they do not have enough food to eat and sometimes they even have to resort to eating the seeds that they have set aside for the next planting season," explains Douglas Reimer, the Federation's regional disaster preparedness delegate.

Over 4 billion people, two-thirds of the world's population, live under two dollars a day.

More than 400 million children worldwide under the age of five are malnourished according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Malnutrition must be battled because the silent daily massacre of hunger is a form of murder. Before we can aid the victims of malnutrition, it is vital that we become aware of their suffering and its consequences. Their suffering is real- our hearts must be open.

Imagen de desnutricíon

by Jesse Sullivan

How can I eat happily knowing that today 34,000 children will die of hunger related causes? Stop, and for 10 seconds imagine how hungry you feel when you don't eat food for only a day. Now imagine a little child that you know and love—it could be a sister or a cousin—picture him suffering from hunger. Now look that child in the eyes. Can't you feel his hunger, his suffering, his dull heavy eyes crying out to you as he lies there—dying? Can't you see his innocent little body in sharp contrast with the suffering he is experiencing? You want to feed him, but you have no money and can do nothing but watch his emaciated little chest strain to fill with its last breath of life. The injustice sinks low into your stomach, your heart drops and your whole body gets tight with anger, guilt and anguish. Close your eyes. Imagine it...

Instead of happening to one child, it happens to 34,000 children a day. To help understand this number, just fill up Busch stadium with dead children. Now consider that the fastest growing health problem in the U.S. is obesity. How can you reconcile these two worlds? This same human race where thousands are dying from starvation a day and just a few imaginary national borders away, thousands are killing themselves from overeating. Every time I look down at my food, all I can think about is that little kid with that wasted body and those eyes crying out to me for food. *How can I eat?* My heart sinks with guilt as I bite into my sandwich. It makes me sic;, I am so blessed. I look around me and nobody even realizes. No one knows; nobody cares. They eat as I did before I knew, before I had seen those innocent eyes crying out. Next time you eat, call these children to mind. Not to feel guilty, but to feel so blessed for everything you have. Never take another meal for granted, and let that blessed feeling drive you to provide aid to the hungry in the future.

Why you?

Poetry

by Nima Sheth

Because when you strip off all the materials you'll see that you're just the same as them.

Because you'll fall in love.

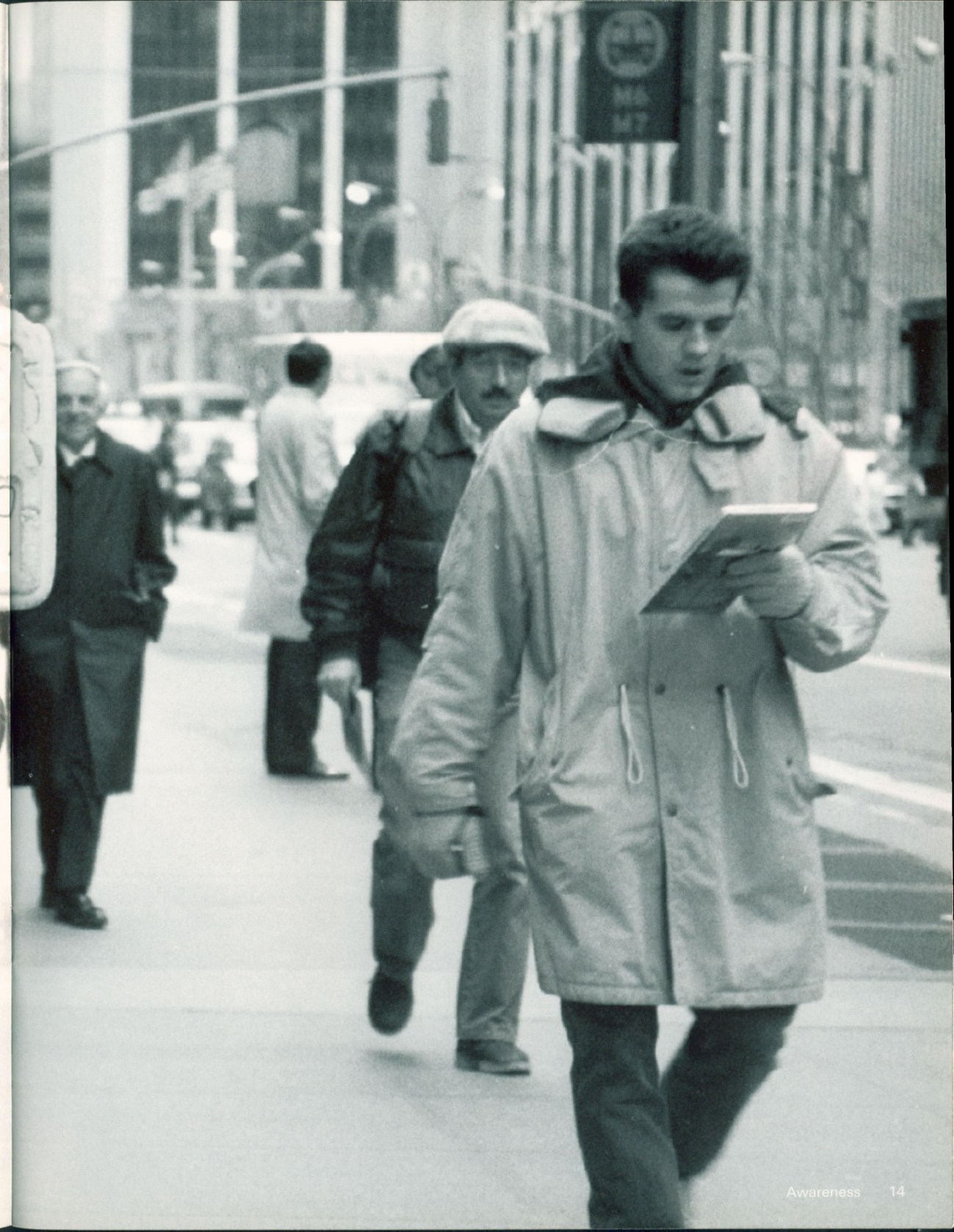
Because you'll find yourself.

Because if you look closely enough, you'll see a reflection of yourself in them.

Because you'll see that you're amazing.

Because you'll see that you hold the key to unlock the immense potential of humanity.

Photography by Mev Puleo



An older woman displaced by the fighting speaks with relief workers. The woman's wrist was broken when she was beaten by Jingaweit militia during an attack on her village. *photo from USAID*

Sudan

By Sarika Gupta

The Darfur Conflict.

Great truth lies behind the old saying, "Ignorance is bliss." While living in part of the world in which people generally lead predictable and comfortable lives, it's easy to assume that the rest of humanity lives in a similar fashion. Many people, however, don't share this good fortune. The people of Darfur, a region in Western Sudan, stand out as a significant and arguably extreme example of this disparity. Although Sudan itself has hardly had a stable history, the situation in Darfur became critical in the spring of 2003 when Arab militias began the mass killing of Africans. Many have labeled the situation as the worst humanitarian catastrophe on the planet. Complicated roots brought about this conflict, and today, the situation in Darfur remains chaotic while the international community falls short of establishing peace and justice.

The Conflict

Darfur's 6 million tribal people can be divided into two main groups: Africans and Arabs. The conflict started when an African group, tired of the continuous neglect from the Arab dominated Khartoum government, launched a surprise rebel attack on Sudan's El Fasher airport on April 25, 2003. The Arab government used the Arab tribes in Darfur as a tool to crush the rebellion and bring the land under government control. The Arab tribal militias were only too willing to attack the Africans with whom they had been in a constant struggle for limited land and water resources. The Africans started calling the Arab militias janjaweed, meaning "devils on horseback."

The government's so-called counterinsurgency against the Africans soon turned genocidal in nature, making no distinction between rebels and civilians. First, army aircraft would bomb an African village to terrorize the civilians. Then, the Arabs and/or army would surround the village and proceed to loot it, rape the females, and steal the livestock. Finally, they would burn the entire village down and shoot anyone who had not already run away. By practicing these scorched earth policies, the Janjaweed ensured that African Darfurians could not return to their homes, as it would take years before the land would be habitable again.

As can be expected, the Darfur crisis comes with great accounts of devastation and brutality. On July 17, 2004, aid workers from Darfur returned to the U.S. claiming evidence of genocide and describing mass graves of people shot in the back of the head. In addition, the World Health Organization estimated that between the months of May and October of 2004 alone, 70,000 people died in Darfur due to malnutrition and disease after their displacement. It is clear that while the militias focused on killing men, they did not hesitate to kill women, children, or the elderly as well. A recent estimate taken in August 2005 indicates that so far 400,000 Africans have died or disappeared and that 2 million remain internally displaced. These displaced people continue to live and die in camps in Sudan or Chad.

Regrettably, the conflict continues to unfold and the situation to grows more chaotic. For instance, by May 2005, there were signs of hope and return to normalcy as displaced people started returning to their lands. These hopes were quelled, however, when the militias returned in September of 2005 and started raiding villages for a second time, with the same brutality as before. Recently, Janjaweed attacks have crossed over into neighboring Chad, turning the genocide into an International conflict from one isolated in the Darfur region.

The government of Sudan has played its own, controversial, role throughout the crisis. Khartoum was denying both its relations to the janjaweed and the existence of a crisis at all as late as 2004. The government continues to deny a racial component to the conflict. Some point to the infighting and confusion within the government itself as a cause to the perpetuation of the mass turmoil. While

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The morning after a Janjaweed militia attack on the village of Borota, January 21, 2006. This Masalit woman's horse was stolen during the attack and she came face-to-face with Janjaweed militia members. // *Human Rights Watch and EPA Photo*

A Sudanese mother and son attempt to approach a food and clothing distribution point as a "special policeman" tries to impose order in a camp for internally displaced people in West Darfur, October 2004.

The Darfur Conflict.

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doing so deliberately or not, it's as though the minority Arab government continues to stumble upon genocide as a default means of controlling its people without thinking of the consequences.

The International Response

Looking back on the inaction of the world during the genocide that occurred in Rwanda a decade ago, many national and international advocacy groups hoped that giving Darfur the label of genocide would elicit an impressive international response. According to Article II of the Genocide Convention, a genocide consists of acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group by killing members of the group, inflicting conditions of life upon them that would lead to their destruction, or taking measures to prevent future births in that group.

On July 22, 2004, the United States Congress became the first body to declare Darfur a genocide. Other world leaders, including the European Union (EU), Canada, Britain, and the U.N., however, did not follow suit. Unfortunately, neither the U.S. nor the U.N. has worked on gathering a multinational force to intervene in Darfur. Until anyone else takes action, the world seems to be relying on the African Union (AU) forces to handle the situation. The AU, however, lacks the experience and equipment to effectively stop the militia and have themselves become targets of some ambushes. Recently, the U.S. has been putting pressure on the UN and NATO to aid the AU forces.

While effective force has not been deployed in Darfur, other measures, though not always successful, have been taken to apply pressure on the Khartoum government, mainly by means of sanctions. One of the fundamental flaws of the actions taken by the U.S. and the U.N., however, is that they are hoping that the same government who is arming the militias will also help pacify them17. As peace talks continue, the Security Council has recently decided to refer the Darfur crisis to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to make the leaders of Sudan responsible for their actions. On June 6, 2005, the chief prosecutor for the ICC announced the opening of an investigation of Darfur. Now there is pressure on the ICC to do an effective job in Darfur to uphold both its own legitimacy as well the modern world's ability to administer justice.

Most recently in the U.S. Congress, the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006 passed in the House and is now waiting to reach the floor of Senate. This bipartisan bill calls for sanctions against individuals responsible for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity and supports measures for the protecting civilians, humanitarian operations, and peace efforts in Darfur.

Conclusion

Both the conflict and the response to it in Darfur present the

Population
41,236,378

Ethnicity
Black 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, Foreigners 2%, Other 1%

Language
Arabic (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, diverse dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Sudanic languages

Religions
Sunni Muslim 70% (in north), indigenous beliefs 25%, Christian 5% (mostly in south and Khartoum)

world with important messages and realities. It seems that while many things improve as society advances, one thing remains constant is that people can and will resort to violence and mass murders to solve their problems. Whatever steps have been taken so far to prevent this repetition have clearly failed. While every conflict has its unique roots and methods of execution, one common denominator is that in each case humans become desperate and/or disillusioned enough to cast morality aside to achieve their means.

It's regretful that thousands of people continue to die while countries contemplate which actions will best serve their own agendas.

The other horror of this conflict rests in the apathy and ineffectiveness of the international community to put a stop to it. It's regretful that thousands of people continue to die while countries contemplate which actions will best serve their own agendas. Unfortunately when situations like these arise, people automatically expect the U.N. and other such organizations to handle them, but in some cases, little is being done. For the people who have studied Darfur or are at least aware of the situation, it's frustrating that those who have the power to intervene have been taking limited action.

Part of the problem is that humans struggle with associating reality to what they see, hear, and read about Darfur and other such crises, which leads to the inaction of average citizens and politicians alike. Clearly, it's easier not to think about Darfur and shrug it off as another uncontrollable conflict in an underdeveloped third world society. Unfortunately, protecting ones own interests and day-to-day struggles comes first. Furthermore, the public seldomly receives adequate information about such grave situations to begin with. Ironically, much more attention is given to victims of natural disasters, like hurricanes and earthquakes, in which less people die than to those destitute and helpless victims of state sponsored mass millings.

Sadly, to the average members of modern society, this genocide will come and go without causing as much as a tremor in their lives. For them, the horror of persecution, homelessness, starvation, and brutal torture are intangible concepts, and they are unable to comprehend or relate to the plight of the Darfurians. So, while ignorance may be bliss, it comes at a high price. The most dangerous thing society can do is generalize the human experience and therefore free itself from its responsibility of fighting the extreme injustices that occur even in this day and age.

Woman distraught because of honour crimes. *photo from National Geographic*

Where is the HONOUR IN THIS?

By Nicole Trafton Pakistan

IMAGINE what life would be like if engaging in premarital sex meant death by the hands of your own family members. This life is a reality for thousands of women around the world who are victims of "honor crimes." Honor crimes are those committed against women who are viewed as having "dishonored" their families. Women who engage in premarital sex, adultery, or even those who are rape victims are beaten or murdered by male relatives. A family may view the violation of a woman's chastity as an affront to their honor. Reports from the United Nations Commission on Human Rights show that honor killings have occurred in Albania, Bangladesh, Great Britain, Brazil, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Pakistan, Palestine, Morocco, Sweden, Turkey, and Uganda. The United Nations High Commissioner for human rights described honor killing in a speech on April 10, 2000: "Honor killing is one of history's oldest gender-based crimes. It assumes that a woman's behavior casts a reflection on the family and the community. If women fall in love, seek a divorce even from a battering husband, or enter into a relationship outside marriage they are seen as violating the honor of the community."

Why does it happen?

Honor crimes happen because of certain cultural beliefs. Many of the countries where honor crimes occur are predominantly Muslim, although the practice does not necessarily have religious roots. Sheikh Ahmad Kutty, an Islamic scholar at the Islamic Institute of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, is quoted in Islam Online as stating: "There is no such concept in Islam that is called 'honor killing.' Islam holds every soul in high esteem and does not allow any transgression upon it. It does not allow people to take the law in their own hands and administer justice, because doing so will be leading to chaos and lawlessness. Therefore, based on this, Islam does not permit such killings." There is a psychological term for the mentality of the male family members who commit these crimes against their sisters, mothers, aunts, and cousins. Richard Harvey, a professor of Psychology at St. Louis University, described a phenomenon called "benevolent sexism." Whereas "hostile sexism" is more anti-women, "benevolent sexism" is portrayed as a patriarchal and positive protectionism. Because women are perceived as weak and immature, they must be kept in their place in order to be protected. "Whenever they step out of their place, that's when all hell breaks loose," said Harvey.

Ideas of the woman's role in her family are deeply rooted in culture. Amela Sopovic, an employee for St. Louis Public Schools, moved to St. Louis 10 years ago to escape warfare in Bosnia. She described the family life of Bosnians as very private, where family matters are not discussed with others. In the villages, the man is the head of the household and makes all decisions. She recalled that Albanians who lived in Kosovo would often arrange their daughters' marriages at birth. If the woman refused, this would cause her family dishonor.

What can we do?

Many different organizations have made efforts to assist women who are victims of honor crimes, all which need the time, money, and efforts of volunteers. The UN has set up the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women. The Trust Fund is the only international, grant-making system that supports local, national and regional efforts against violence. The fund has provided more than $10 million US to 198 programs in 100 countries since it began in 1997. Amnesty International has launched a campaign called Stop Violence Against Women. This campaign works to end discriminatory laws and violence against women in nations around the world. On SLU's campus, Una has been involved with ending violence against women. Last year, the proceeds from the Vagina Monologues went to Women's Safe House, Karen House and the V-Day spotlight, the Comfort Women of Japan campaign. The V-Day campaign went to help women who were forced into sexual slavery during Japan's colonialization during World War II. Amelia Glass of Una said, "Una tries to raise awareness about feminism and bring equality for men and women. One of Una's platforms is helping to end violence against women, and we have activities throughout the year." To get involved with Una, e-mail them at una@slu.edu or stop by one of their weekly meetings on Mondays at 7pm in Ritter 200. Even though St. Louis falls under the umbrella of Western thought, we are not immune to this mentality. Honor crimes can happen anywhere, and by working together through an organization, or just raising awareness, we can aid in halting this practice.

ATYPICAL

By James Ryan

Ireland

THE RECENT MURDER of Denis Donaldson, a former high-ranking official for the IRA, has some experts predicting the disruption of the North Ireland ceasefire. About a year ago, Sinn Fein party leader, Gerry Adams, personally vouched for Donaldson, who had been suspected of being an informant for the British MI5. Donaldson, it turns out, was undeserving of Adams's loyalty. In December, he confessed that he had in fact informed for the British enemy. Then, in April, he was found flogged and murdered. To someone unfamiliar with the troubles, these events might seem strange, even bizarre. But to those who love Ireland, "this strange and terrible beauty," stories of betrayal, confession, revenge, and violence are long chapters in its rich and tortured history. The story of Denis Donaldson is a microcosm of the Irish struggles, and only time will tell if his story marks the end of one of the world's longest conflicts, or if it is just another incident of a hopeless struggle.

This past year I started the Irish-American Student Guild at St. Louis University. I was a bit hesitant to start the club because with a lot of Irish-American sentiment comes a glorification of the IRA, and other overdone stereotypes. The thought of starting a "gun-running outfit," or a "drinking club," were hardly my intentions for a CSO. For me, being Irish transcends these stereotypes, because the troubles represent a poignant past that must be remembered and celebrated, but also forgotten, with the current progress of peace.

When I was growing up, I read about Irish folklore like Brian Boru and Finn McCool. During the third grade I was a member of the O'Riada School of Dance. The Chieftains, Van Morrison, and Joshua Tree were some of the soundtracks of my boyhood. And I romanticized the legends of Michael Collins and Conor Larkin, not realizing that my heritage was a complex story regarding my ties to both Ireland and England.

As a young boy, I distinctly remember attending a Wolfe Tones concert where the crowd and band exchanged, "Down with England, Up with Ireland!" My enthusiasm for the chant subsided when I saw my father with a look of ambivalent pride. I was too young to understand the complexity of the issue, not realizing that the conflict hit so close to home.

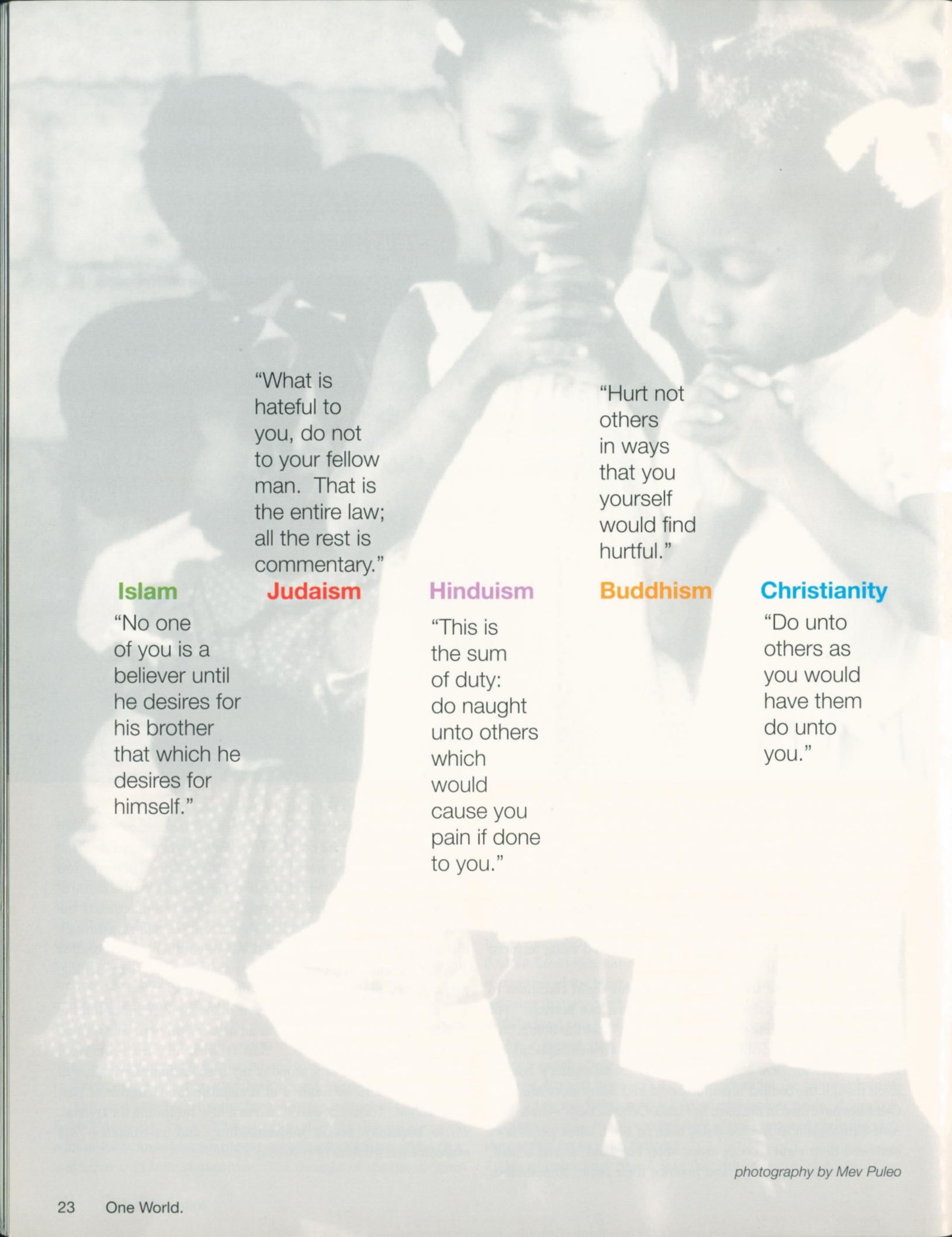
My grandmother Norah was the fifth of twelve children. Her

family had emigrated from Tyrone Co. to North London to find the jobs and security that they could not find in Ireland. This caused a deep rupture in the family as they became divided about their ethnic and national identity, with some brothers fighting and dying for the English, and others returning to their homeland. The harsh realities of poverty eventually forced my grandmother to immigrate to Philadelphia. The tension among the English and Irish in my family is delicate, especially when the IRA started using terrorist tactics to further their cause.

My work with the Irish-American Student Guild continues to teach me about the paradox of the Irish-American heritage. For example, a popular drink among students is the "Irish Car Bomb." It's a harmless, delicious drink, yet its name bears serious implications. For example, an IRA bomb blinded my grandmother's cousin. Even though the conflict is centuries old and many more innocent Catholics have died in the past, her Irish-Catholic faith was shaken. Anti-Catholicism in Ireland dates back to 1695, when penal laws outlawed their right to bear arms, vote, buy land, attend school, speak the native language, and practice their faith. Nonetheless, the persecution does not justify violence against civilians.

In 1835, the French sociologist Gustave de Beaumont visited Ireland and wrote about how the Irish suffering had surpassed "the very extreme of human wretchedness." This suffering, however, has given the Irish people their character. The penal laws, the Battle of Boyne, the famine, the Easter Rising, and Bloody Sunday mark the mournful history of Catholics in Ireland. And yet enduring through this history is a fondness for good times, celebration, and unbridled hospitality. These celebrations center around poetry, story telling, music, dance, and of course, something to drink.

I have been asked, "Why did you name your organization the Guild?" I like to believe a guild is an association of people formed to protect mutual interests. That is what the Irish-American spirit is about. I am very proud of my Irish Catholic heritage, and I will continue to celebrate and remember the struggles of past generations. Today, however, marks a new beginning for Ireland, where hopefully peace, understanding, and co-existence will overcome the troubles of yesterday's past.



Islam

"No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."

Judaism

"What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire law; all the rest is commentary."

Hinduism

"This is the sum of duty: do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you."

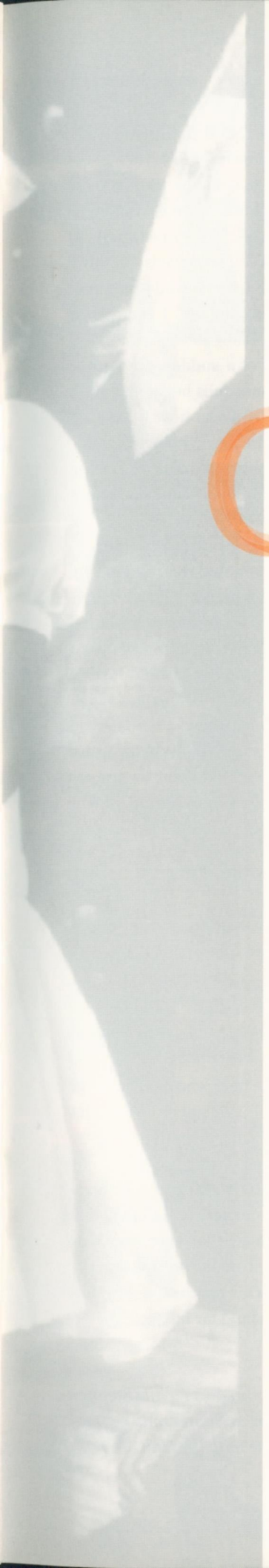
Buddhism

"Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."

Christianity

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

photography by Mev Puleo



ONE message

In all the differing ideologies we find the common theme to love our neighbor. This message of faith should inspire all to action in service of God. We should approach other religions not defensively or with contempt, but instead we should realize the richness of truth inherent in each one of them. In learning more about other faith traditions, we not only grow in our understanding of the world and our neighbor but we grow to a deeper understanding our own religious beliefs. It is horrible to think of how many wars have been fought, and people have been killed in the name of God. Ignorance is the cause, and it will only be remedied by education. The best education is experience. Make a commitment to visit one faith service other than your own this summer.

Misconceptions of Islam by Sara Beg

For the past few years, the media has given the world a certain impression of Muslims—however, it is not the best one. I am sure that you have seen more negative things than positive ones about Islam in the news recently. The media portrays Muslims as terrorists and "crazy people," but they are basing their judgement of an entire religion on one person or group of fundamentalists. There are over a billion Muslims on the planet, and we are not all terrorists. Sorry, folks! Not true. The true Islamic message is based on submission to God and caring for our neighbor. "Jihad"—which has been translated by the media to mean "holy war"—was first used by Muhammed to refer to an inner spiritual struggle. Every religion has their small radical fundamentalists sect that misconstrues the religion itself. Just as you wouldn't want your whole family to be judged by the actions of that one crazy uncle.

Another huge misconception about Islam concerns Muslim women. In almost everything I have seen on television, it portrays women as oppressed beings who are unable to speak their minds. This is completely untrue. If you knew me, you would most definitely not think I was oppressed. I started to wear a Hijab (that is the head cover that Muslim women wear) my sophomore year of high school. One of my friends said that she was surprised that I was so loud because I wear a Hijab. So now just because I wear a scarf, is my personality supposed to change? I don't think so. But why did she think that? It can be traced back—in large part—to the way the media stereotypes women in Islam.

I challenge you to try to learn more about the true Islamic religion. Visit the mosque on campus, come to an MSA meeting or befriend a Muslim on campus to end the ignorance of media stereotypes.

collage by Junaid Munshi

I AM A STUDENT AT SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY. Over Christmas, my marine infantry battalion was activated and instead of going back to school, I am spending the spring in Iraq. I am between Fallujah and Baghdad, in the heart of the Sunni Triangle. These are random observations from my war. It is not complete. It will probably all change tomorrow. Forgive me if it's not organized, living in the land of insanity makes it difficult to be coherent. Let's go.

Twenty-some Iraqis were killed here yesterday. They were blown apart by mortars at about 2 in the afternoon. The rounds landed about 200 meters from me. It was a big, bloody mess. Shrapnel turns human flesh into hamburger. Today their relatives found out the names of the dead. Their families' screams echoed throughout the base. Luckily, they were only Iraqis, so who really cares, right? After a while, you start to feel that way.

We don't call them Iraqis. Everyone over here calls them Hajis, after the kid in Johnny Quest. It's not meant to be degrading, it's just natural. We say it as a joke, but in reality, it is our defense. We call them Hajis for the same reason our fathers called the Vietnamese Charlie or gooks, and our grandfathers used the terms Krauts and Japs or Nips. We do it so it's easier to kill them. That little kid that was killed a few days ago on aid , when a patrol blew a shape charge at his front door, as he walked outside to see what was happening--he was only a Haji.

I sleep in a prison cell, literally. It was part of Saddam Hussein's most notorious torture center. I eat breakfast where he killed 30,000 Iraqis over the last 10 years. Mortars can be really scary. Being woken up by mortars sucks, especially when they are close to you. It's a strange feeling, just waiting for the next thing to blow up. After a while, you start to jump at every loud noise. One thing that sucks worse than mortars is getting shot at. Getting shot at is scary as fuck. Anyone who is shot at and acts like it's not a big deal wasn't close enough to the bullets or is a fucking liar.

Yesterday a kid, who couldn't have been any older than 4, pointed a stick at me like a rifle and pretended to shoot me. I wonder if someday my kids will meet him on some distant battlefield. I pray to God that if I have a son, he never has to go to war. That would tear my heart out. I feel very bad for my family. I know that I am putting them through hell. Sometimes I feel guilty for not just studying abroad. If you get a chance, hug your mom--for me. My mom is 9,000 miles and six months away. I would do anything to give her a hug right now. I miss her a lot.

Watching them load bodies of Marines onto a medivac leaves you feeling empty. I can't speak for all, but for most of us it seems that our biggest concern is not getting killed, but getting left behind. It feels that everyone back in the world is getting on with their lives, finishing school, getting jobs or internships, making friends, planning their future--and we are frozen in time. When I get back, friends will be gone, innocence will be lost, and things will have changed. I just want things to be the way they used to be.

When we first got here, a little kid use to come by my post and beg for food. His legs were all fucked up from air strikes. I got him some medical care, which made me feel good. Then, in early April, all hell broke loose. I haven't seen him since. I hope he is all right.

I can shoot all day long, but if I got wounded here and sent home tomorrow, I wouldn't be allowed to set foot in a bar. I guess I am not responsible enough to handle alcohol. It's really eerie at night, standing watch over a nearby village. All of a sudden, the power goes out, and speakers from all the local mosques begin sounding the call to prayer. You feel surrounded. Then you hear shots that are pretty close. It's even eerier if earlier in the day you saw hundreds of Iraqi men pouring into town, looking at you and making throat-cutting gestures and screaming for your death. It makes you get a sick feeling in your stomach. After hundreds of hours of waiting, you start wanting something to happen to break the boredom. Then something does happen and you remember that no matter how boring it is, it's better to be bored than scared. SLU seems like the happiest place on Earth right now. I would love to be in class. War is really confusing. When things explode, people have a tendency to get on the radio and scream. When you are watching a firefight at night you see tracers flying all around, but you can't tell who is where or who is shooting who.

It's frustrating when you see things you can do or problems that you can fix that may save your life. But you are ignored because you are just a lance corporal. I can tell you all about troop levels and attitudes of the people and if we are getting what we need, but I am not allowed to talk about it. This is not meant to be an argument for or against war. For me, the time for that argument is long since past. It's not meant to make those who know me worry or impress anyone. It's meant as a glimpse into this thing called war and this place called Iraq. Everyone's war is different. There are those here who have it better than I, and those that have it much worse. It's meant as a reminder that every day 100,000 of your peers are risking everything that we have, because you asked us to.

War is not sexy, it's not a movie. Iraq is a real place, not just something on the news. You are the future leaders of America. You have tremendous power. I beg you to realize that your decisions have real consequences, that your actions really do matter. For more than 700 of us, it's already too late. Our parents failed. They allowed their children to be sent to die in a land far far away. Let us not repeat their mistake.

This article first appeared in the UNews in 2004 while Stephen Webber was serving in Iraq. He is a senior at Saint Louis University and is returning to serve a second time with the United States Marine Corps in Iraq this summer.

War Prot
PEAC
IRAQ
BAGHDAD
Ayro
Baldwin
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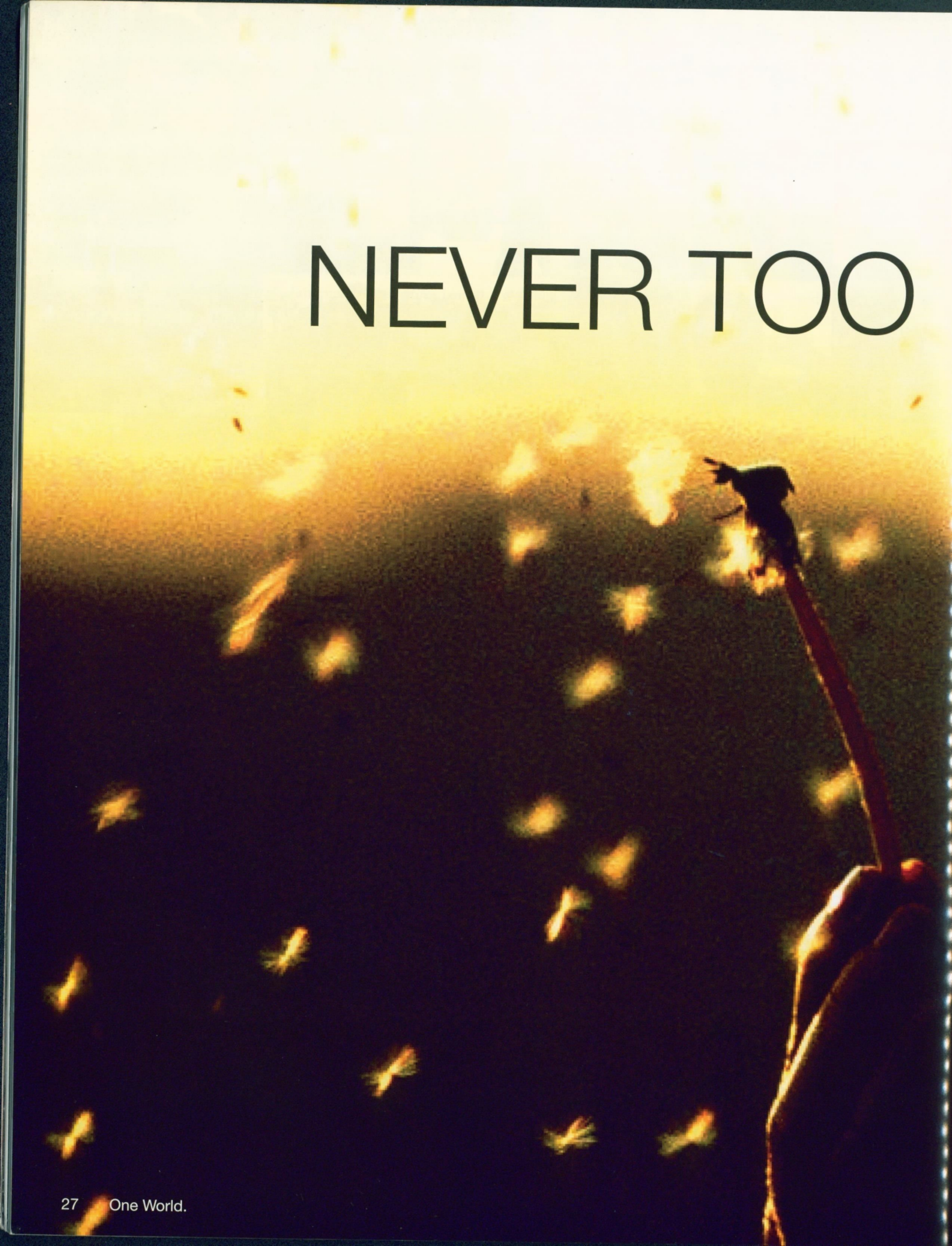
Jacobsen
Johnson

NEVER TOO



LATE?

By Kelly Bienhoff

Global Warming

HAVE YOU EVER VISITED MIAMI? Have you ever visited the World Trade Center Memorial in New York City? Have you ever considered the possibility that your grandchildren may not be able to visit these locations in the next century?

Global Warming. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You've heard it a thousand times and I definitely will be the first to say that this "crisis" seems to be getting old. I'll speak for a lot of people when I say that it doesn't seem to be affecting me right now. The theory is both controversial and speculative, not to mention that the earth is pretty unpredictable, even for scientists. They haven't been around for the past 30,000 years so how can they say that what happens in one century is going to hurt us irrevocably? Who's to say that this warming isn't normal? In my life there are more pressing concerns, like how I'm going to pay for college, what I plan to do once I graduate, and to be honest, what I'm going to do this Friday night. I mean, from what I felt this past winter, the annoying wind still seems to be blowing cold here in St. Louis. I continue to pile on the gloves, hats and scarves and scrape ice off of my car.

So why am I writing this article? Because (drumroll, please) the "point of no return" is supposedly in the next few decades. I'm not going to start quoting statistics or talking about the greenhouse effect and our carbon dioxide emissions. You guys all took high school biology and I'm sure you studied the environment at one point or another. You're all responsible adults (or at least, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt). You understand that if the environment is getting warmer, the glaciers and polar ice caps will melt and the seas will rise, hence those questions I posed to you at the beginning of this article.

So what is the "point of no return"? It's the point when, if I don't change, if you don't change, if we all don't change, then we're shooting ourselves in the foot. It's like that "Sticking it to the Man" commercial from Sprint. You know the one I'm talking about, the one where the corporate guy acts in a way that ultimately undermines the CEO of the company, which he, in fact, turns out to be. In the same way, if our society continues to act the way we have, we are essentially "sticking it" to the earth which is ultimately "sticking it" to ourselves. The commercial is funny, but this scenario is not.

Now I know that you may not believe in global warming or its importance to you and this "point of no return" is only a possibility. But what if it's not. All I'm suggesting you do is to watch a movie trailer. I'll let you decide for yourself what to think or do. The film is called "An Inconvenient Truth." You can check it out at movies.yahoo.com.

Hey, if worse comes to worst, I waste five minutes of your time and you end up watching a trailer for the next Mission Impossible movie instead. Best case scenario – well, that's for the future to know, and for us to find out.

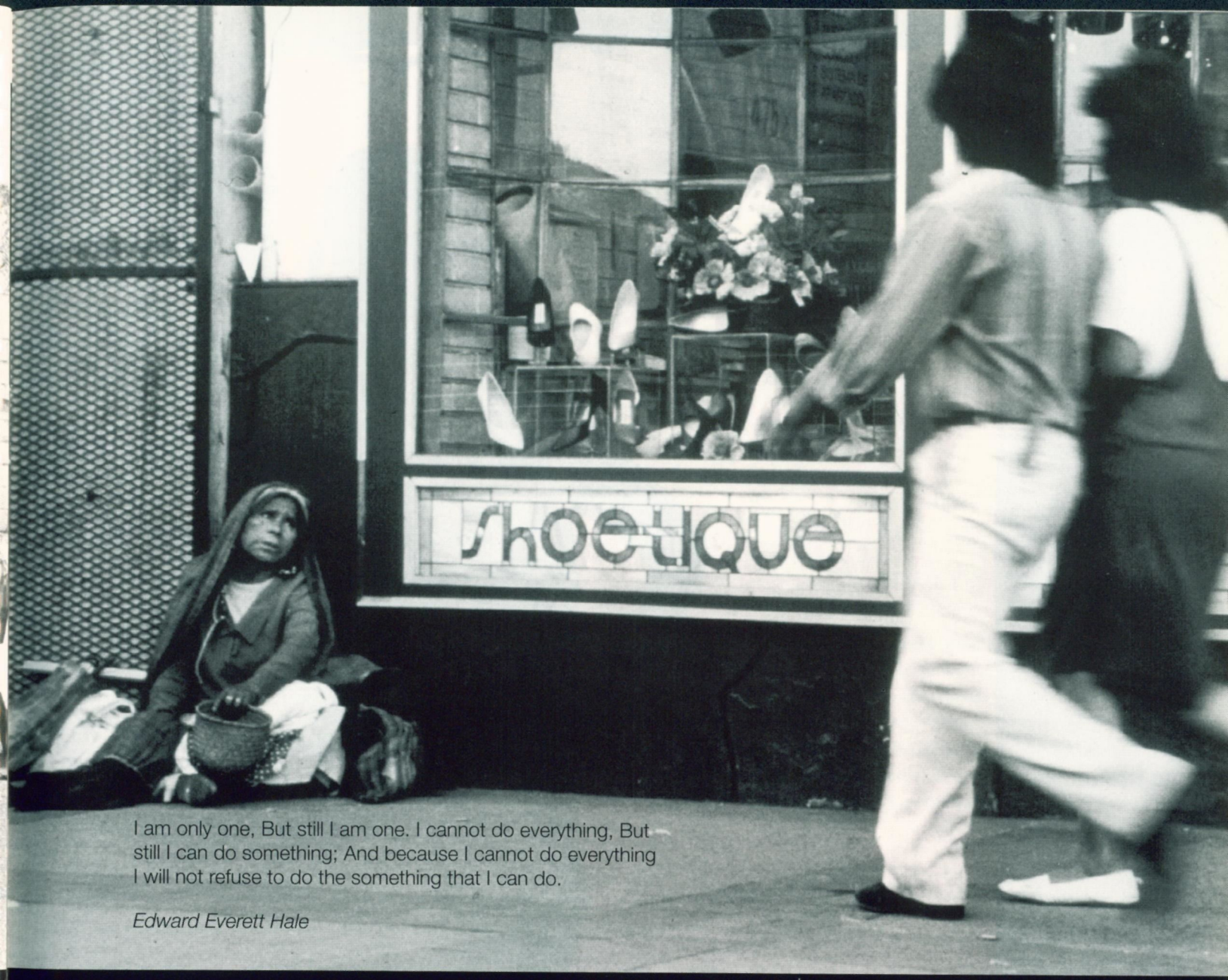
Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

AWARENESS

PHOTOESSAY

photography by Mev Puleo



I am only one, But still I am one. I cannot do everything, But still I can do something; And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

Edward Everett Hale

"We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."

Martin Luther King Jr.

By: Suman Rao, Joban Vaishnav,
Sreeya Yalamanchaali

Beyond Beauty

"Breathtaking!" This is likely the first thought that will enter one's mind when standing before India's famous mausoleum, the Taj Mahal. The remarkable architecture and overwhelming beauty of the Taj Mahal is one that encapsulates the true depth, beauty, and richness of a cultured nation. The monument almost comes as a surprise to tourists as they walk through a set of towering red gates that seal off the world behind them--a world filled with extreme calamity and hardship. Certain aspects of the adversity prevalent in Indian society were recently brought to the attention of numerous students on SLU's campus who attended the viewing of the movie *Born into the Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids*. The documentary depicted several children living in the brothel-filled red light district of Calcutta, their futures unavoidably filled with prostitution, drug dealing, and violence. In order to ameliorate the situation of children born into the brothels of India, it is important to discover the origin of this predicament. The current circumstances of these children who lack any hope of acquiring better futures can be attributed to certain socio-economic problems that prevail alongside the extreme suffering of billions of people who populate the country.

With a total population of over one billion people and with a baby born every 1.25 seconds, India also harbors about 375 million people who live in extreme poverty.

The problematic issue of brothels is rooted in the widespread poverty existing in India. With a total population of over one billion people and with a baby born every 1.25 seconds, India also harbors about 375 million people who live in extreme poverty. According to 2006 statistics, India's population continues to grow at an annual rate of 1.25% per year, the annual birth rate almost tripling the annual mortality rate. With such a large number of inhabitants, the distribution of wealth amongst India's people is tremendously uneven. The rich live very comfortably while the poor suffer hopelessly. Illiteracy proves to be the highlighted cause of Indian poverty, preventing people from attaining stable jobs. Much of the poor, illiterate populace relies on agriculture as its means of financial support. However, due to the yearly monsoon season and lack of irrigation, this line of work is highly unreliable. Crops are destroyed and again these unfortunate farmers are left with no mode of monetary gain. Unable to sustain

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Woman standing in an alleyway in India.
// flickr.om

Beyond Beauty.

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themselves or their families, many people are forced to work as prostitutes, not by choice, but primarily by necessity. Their lifestyle paves a predetermined pathway of violence, drugs, and sex for their children—again, amplifying the unending crisis of brothels in India.

The issue of India's widespread poverty is strongly connected to and engaged in a vicious cycle with another source of the brothel crisis: the lack of education among the underprivileged. When glancing at current statistics, it appears the education system in India has strong prospects, as the literacy rate is nearing almost 65%. However, it is important not to be misled by this number as it fails to distinguish literacy rates between individuals living in rural as opposed to urban areas. This separation is clarified by the detail that in 2001, the urban literacy rate was 80.06% but the rural literacy rate was a mere 59.21%. This significant difference in literacy rates never allows the underprivileged class to prosper, seeing as they continually compete with the better educated urbanites. Thus, even though India has some of the best universities to offer, including the Indian Institute of Technology, the challenge of sustaining proper schooling among the poor makes the goal of higher education unattainable. This issue was touched on in *Born into the Brothels*. Not one of the children in the documentary was enrolled in a school prior to intervention. This problem stems from the reluctance of school officials to accept impoverished children into their institutions due to their underprivileged background or questionable health status. Additionally, the families of these children showcase a certain unwillingness to passionately pursue educational opportunities for the kids. This attitude can be attributed to their unfamiliarity with the established educational system and their obvious lack of resources. Also portrayed by the documentary is another regrettable problem. Even after being enrolled in local schools, many of the children failed to

> "I have come to realize more and more that the greatest disease and the greatest suffering is to be unwanted, unloved, uncared for, to be shunned by everybody, to be just nobody to no one."
>
> *Mother Theresa*

A girl living in the brothels and small children born into the life. They are featured in the movie *Born into Brothels*. // *thecia.com and hrw.org*

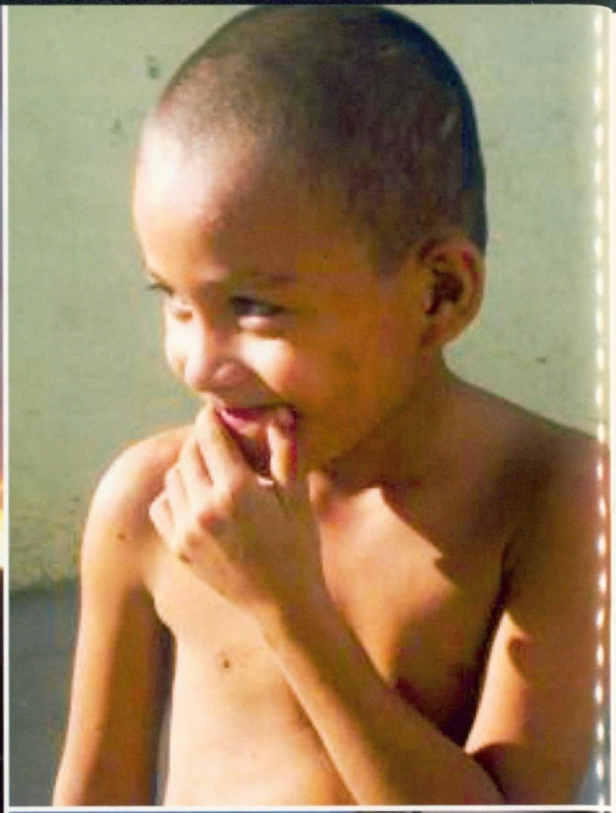
remain there. Although education is a great escape opportunity for children destined to future misery, the omnipotence of their current situation hinders any progression.

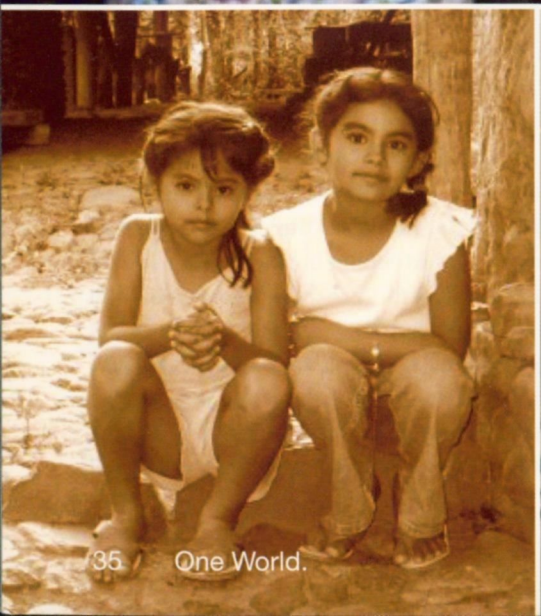
No country, no matter how organized or civilized, can function properly without the aid of a stable government. The preamble of the Indian constitution claims it is a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic divided into a legislative branch, executive branch, and a judicial branch. The executive branch consists of the President, Vice-President, the Prime Minister, and the Council of Ministers, with the greatest power lying in the hands of the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Similar to any government, the Indian government, despite its attempt to remain structured, is undoubtedly corrupt in some aspects. Many times, leaders tend to engage in black market activities to create a fortune and further their personal careers. They receive bribes from individual benefactors in return for their services or public support. They bribe individual judges, investors and companies, such as the press, in exchange for more positive publicity.

With corruption from the top down, the Indian government has become inefficient. The government has accentuated thoughts of liberty and equality for all religions and castes, while ignoring productivity and security of the country itself. The government mainly focuses on distributing wealth among the upper class with no notion of creating new wealth to improve the standard of living for the rest of the populace. The inefficiency of the government is accurately displayed in *Born into the Brothels* as a simple ration card is extremely difficult to obtain. It requires thorough patience and deciphering of unorganized paperwork. A scene of the ration card office in the documentary shows messy piles of paperwork lying in an endless row of shelves, almost falling to the floor, while other ignored papers lay on the desks of the workers. Apathy is the greatest crime committed by the Indian government.

The prospect of self-preservation, power, and greed rules the country while the importance of enrichment, new wealth, and betterment of the country is pushed to the bottom of the to-do list. Thus, poverty and lack of education and, in turn, the brothel problem could be fixed if the Indian government would act for the betterment of the country as a whole rather than for the individual self. Here in America, discrimination and inequality is still prevalent, yet our citizens do not suffer the extreme poverty of Indians and do not have to resort to the brothel life, owing to the American government's drive for prosperity and security. Just as India harbors one of the most beautiful monuments of the world, beyond the pristine gates it is also home to a whole different dimension of poverty. The children of this dimension are helplessly predestined to the same fate.





The Forsaken

By Jesse Sullivan
El Salvador

11/3/05

The waves came one after another ceaselessly crashing in on the dirty sand beach. White foam glides its way up the shore, struggling and straining to continue its climb—but to no avail. Eventually, the wave would reach that point at which its momentum and desire was overpowered by the laws of reality. From that point where its will had managed to hurl itself forward with mass, magnitude and strength for thousands of miles across the Pacific Ocean; it had all surmounted in this meager moment when the wave slowly crept its final inch of forward existence. I remember I thought to myself, "What was the point of it all?" It had with all its might struggled to arrive at the exact same point as the one before it and the one that was to come after it. It had its whole life believed that it would be the one wave that would defy its reality and flow far beyond the shore that had stifled the dreams of so many that had come before. However—as it started to slow and realize its fate would be the same, that it too was bound to the same limited existence of all its predecessors—I could not help but look into the thin glassy failure of a wave and see the reflection of my own disillusioned face.

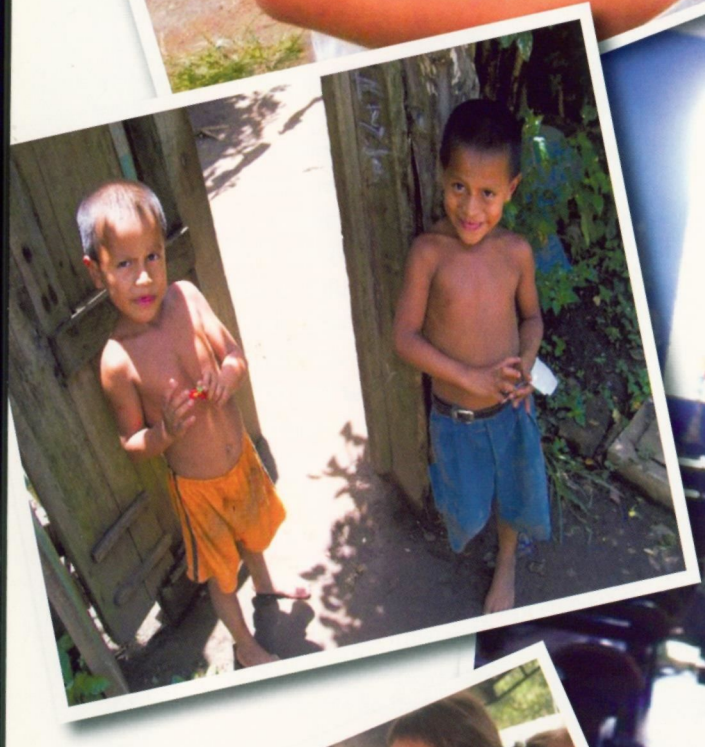
My soul is weighed down, and drops further still with every broken wave. I have to do something; someone has to do something, and He is just idly watching it all from the fire in the sky.

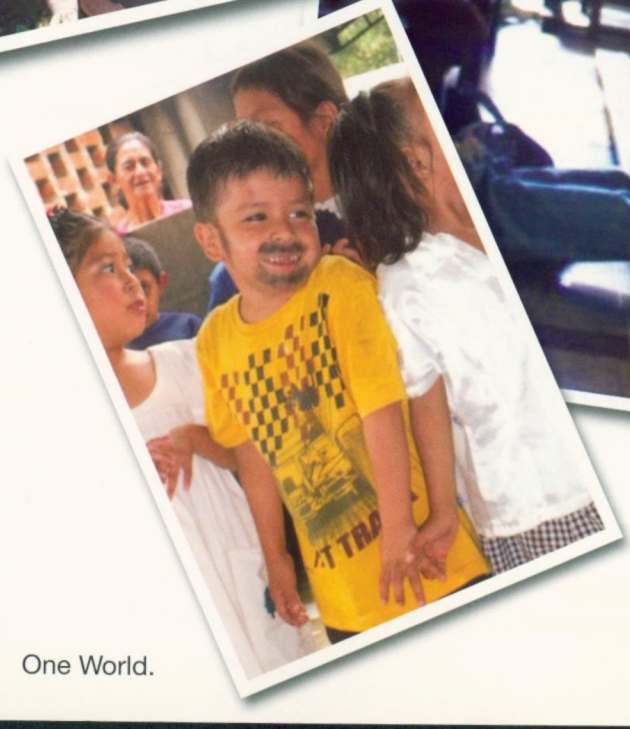
I look up from the shore to the sky and it has been set on fire with orange and pink lighting up the gray night sky of El Salvador. I walk alone on the dirty sand along the shore that stretches all the way to Guatemala, stepping over dead brown seaweed and sticks that litter the beach, lying there like skeletons of shipwrecked dreams. The sound of crashing waves along the breakers fills the silence. Particles of sand and dried salt cling to my skin in the hot moist air. My soul is weighed down and drops further still with every broken wave. I have to do something, someone has to do something, and He is just idly watching it all from the fire in the sky. I step out into the ocean and immediately: I am hit by the first wave. Its force pushes me back and my mind flashes with an image—its Mauricio, a cute, square-headed, three year old boy with little dimples. He has a bloated belly and is crying for food because he is severely malnourished. My heart sinks but I keep moving forward. Then wave two pound my gut. This time it's the image of the city La Chacra. A woman lying in her own filth with her only possession, a pig, lying next to her on the bare ground under her makeshift aluminum lean-to. I wonder if she was one of the people killed there during the mudslides last week? Or maybe she was one of the five girls that were raped and murdered leaving the shelter this week. At least I know it wasn't Lucy or her 12-year-old sister Lillian who had taken me in as a member of their family for a weekend. They are both so talented and pretty—natural born leaders with so much potential. Too bad they will never reach their potential because their family—like almost all the families here—can't afford a college education. Wave three hits me like a ton of bricks right in my chest: I see Sonya a little girl at the orphanage waving goodbye to me as our bus pulls out of sight, maybe for good. In her face it is hard to see all the pain she has been through in her life. Her parents beating her; her father raping her; not having enough food and living on the street. Where did she find the strength to smile? She was able to call forth so much love from me. I can't explain it for the short amount of time that we had spent together. I want to save her from this life, just like I want to save Josue, who convulses with epileptic fits when he does not get his medicine. His mother, who had to beg for the small bus fare to get to the hospital, sobbed as the doctor told her the medication would cost $12 a month; he might as well have said a million.

I hold up my arms and push the waves back, but they won't stop. It's useless, the massive wave rolls right into the shore just the same. I look out and they just keep coming the next bringing just as much pain, if not more pain than the one before. Volcanic eruptions and ruined coffee fields mean at least a year without income, without food. The rain won't stop, flooding and mudslides ruining the little pathetic stacks of garbage these people called homes. Earthquake- 6.2. Hurricanes.

I punch the waves and stand there defeated and weeping. The pain is real, and all I can do is helplessly stand there and look up at the trace of fire in the sky that has faded into the darkness of night and ask, "My God, my God; why have you forsaken us?"

El Salvador





The Savior

By Jesse Sullivan
El Salvador

Sisyphus is a character in Greek mythology who has the task of rolling a boulder to the top of a large hill. No matter how tirelessly he works to get the rock to the top, the gods step in and roll the boulder back down the hill. I am intrigued with the character of Sisyphus because I believe that all of us, in a sense, have entered his struggle. We all set ideals, either for ourselves or for the world around us. We struggle to overcome the deficiencies, the chaos and the problems in order to reach the peace that comes with order and righteousness. However, no matter how hard we struggle to climb up and triumph over our flaws, and the flaws of the world, we seem to fail falling back down to the bottom of the hill. When I experienced the complex problems and immense suffering in El Salvador—which I could not fix—I toppled down the hill.

Upon returning home from my semester abroad in El Salvador, I could not get these images of suffering out of my head. I remember a nine-month-old child covered from head to foot in red and black charred fleshy blotches as the result of a horrible allergic reaction. He looked like a little possessed demon screaming out in excruciating pain. But when I looked into his eyes, he went still, and his big white eyes looked back at me and went right through to the depths of my soul. I remember thinking it was God Himself looking at me, calling out, trapped in that suffering. He was pleading me to get Him out. I don't understand exactly what it all means yet, but I looked into the eyes of this hellish suffering and I saw God. Levinas, a philosopher during the Holocaust, claimed there are two sides to suffering. One is the horrible, meaningless side that has no redemptive quality and remains a source of mystery. But the other side of suffering can be a "half-opening" to the person who witnesses it, calling forth a sense of love, compassion, and empathy. The compassionate opening of the witness does not justify the suffering, but at the very least, it can provoke change in the life of the witness.

This suffering in El Salvador—in my heart; in this world—if nothing else, has allowed me to view my own life as a gift. I am so blessed. We are so blessed. The biggest sin we can commit is in striving for more we forget how good we already have it. I took a hot shower for the first time in four months and realized that I am one of the lucky few in the history of the world to enjoy such a luxury. I walked into my house with its solid roof and floors and knew I was in the privileged elite. I sit now with a plate of food before me on the table and I bow my head in utter reverence calling to mind those who are dying while I eat. I am so blessed and it makes me sick to my stomach. Why do I have so much, when they have so little? I don't deserve it. I flew back into the Miami airport after four months of witnessing the raw depth and reality of a people who struggle just to survive weighing heavily on my mind. I looked at the magazine rack and noticed what I had missed while I was gone—Jessica Simpson got a divorce. How petty and shallow it all seemed now. Guilt mixed with thankfulness spurs me on to help those who I feel like I've abandoned back in El Salvador. I have been a wreck since I returned from El Salvador. I like to fix things, control things, and I like to strive for the ideal. But this time the ideal was unobtainable; thus my fascination with Sisyphus. How am I to respond knowing that the Salvadoran people will continue to suffer no matter how hard I work knowing that I cannot reach the ideal.

At first I tried to rely on myself, and just work harder, but in doing this I am doomed to face the hopeless life of a long defeat. However, if I place my trust in God, I allow God's grace and mercy to span the gap between where I am and where I could be; where the world is and where the world should be. I do not yet have the finality of the eternal peace that comes from resting the rock on the top of the hill; I have not yet reached the ideal; I am still imperfect and so is this world, but I now have access to the ideal through the grace of God. I perceive that I am fighting in a battle bigger than my own, and realize that I have joined a struggle that will ultimately not be decided solely by my own victory nor my loss. Instead, the one more powerful than me will decide the final outcome, while I can only rely on God's grace and do my small part.

Experiencing suffering in El Salvador revealed the ultimate failure of relying on myself to bring about the ideal, but more importantly, it opened me up to receive the grace of God. As I receive the Eucharist at mass, I look up at Jesus suffering on the cross and see his arms stretched wide from this world to the next and say, "Lord I am not worthy to recieve you, but only say the word and I shall be healed." Grace fills my hollow body with hope. In the suffering of Jesus, I see the plight of the Salvadoran people, but I can also see through their suffering to the day of their redemption.

CALLTOACTION

You have the capacity to do amazing things and it starts by realizing that. Get acquainted with some of the issues. Figure out what area you are interested in; what speaks to your heart and calls for you to respond. Find a group of people who are working in your area of interest. Chances are that an organization here at SLU or in the STL community is already working hard on the issue and just waiting for your help.

Amnesty International: Human Rights Organization

Any project imaginable, seeking any type of talent. Nationwide (CA-Chicago-NY)

www.amnestyusa.org/activism/volunteer.do

OXFAM: Finding an end to Global Poverty Volunteer research Assistant

Boston, Washington, DC/ There is also an office in the UK

www.oxfamamerica.org/whoweare/ineterns_volunteers

Call To Action – Vigil for Darfur

St. Louis Save Darfur Coalition

Saturday May 10, 2006

6:30 PM Candlelight Vigil at the steps of the Missouri History Museum

Followed by

A presentation by Jerry Fowler: Genocide Emergency: Darfur, Sudan-Who Will Survive Today?

7:00 PM Missouri History Museum

check www.slu.edu for our website listing.

email us at slu.oneworld@gmail.com to start a dialogue with us.